

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 999

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT YO

SUBJECT: RANKING CROATIAN OFFICIAL ASSESSES CURRENT CAMPAIGN
AGAINST SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS

LONDON PLEASE PASS TO AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN

REF: A. ZAGREB 983

B. BELGRADE 6450 AND PREVIOUS

1.SUMMARY. PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIALIST ALLIANCE OF THE WORKING PEOPLE OF CROATIA (SAWPC), IVO MARGAN, WHO IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE PRESIDUM OF THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS OF CROATIA, REVIEWED THE CURRENT ANTI-ENEMIES CAMPAIGN IN YUGOSLAVIA AND IN PARTICULAR THE CAMPAIGN IN CROATIA, IN A MEETING WITH ME DECEMBER 12. WHILE ADDING LITTLE DETAIL TO WHAT HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY EMBASSY BELGRADE AND CONSULATE GENERAL ZAGREB, MARGAN MADE TWO POINTS WHICH ARE ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY: (1) THE YUGOSLAV LEADERSHIP EXPECTS THE SUBVERSIVE ANTI-YUGOSLAV EFFORTS SUPPORTED BY OUTSIDE FORCES TO CONTINUE THROUGH THE "CRITICAL PERIOD" FOLLOWING TITO'S DEATH; AND (2) DESPITE OFFICIAL ASSURANCES AND CLAIMS OF GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND THE USSR, RELATIONS ARE AFFECTED BY THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMINFORMISTS WHO HAVE HAD THE EVIDENT SUPPORT OF THE USSR. END SUMMARY.

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2. MARGAN POINTED OUT, AS HAVE OTHER CROATIAN SPOKESMEN IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, THAT THE AUTHORITIES ARE ATTEMPTING TO THWART THE ENTIRE RANGE OF SUBVERSIVE EFFORTS, BUT WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMINFORMISTS. HE SAID THAT VARIOUS COMINFORMIST GROUPS UNCOVERED IN THE PAST YEAR (HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO MONTENEGRO, SERBIA, AND CROATIA) HAD DETAILED PROGRAMS AND PLANS IN ANTICIPATION OF "THE CRITICAL MOMENT" WHEN TITO DIES. THEY HAD A COMPLETE POLITICAL PROGRAM WHICH CALLED FOR THE REMOVAL OF HIGHLY PLACED YUGOSLAV LEADERS AND A RE-ORIENTATION OF YUGOSLAVIA BACK INTO THE WARSAW PACT. THEIR MATERIALS, PRINTED AND OTHER, CAME DIRECTLY FROM SOURCES IN THE EAST; HE CITED KIEV AND PRAGUE.

3. WHILE OFFICIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES ARE OFFICIALLY DESCRIBED AS GOOD, MARGAN INDICATED THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION IN THE MINDS OF THE YUGOSLAV LEADERS THAT THE NEOCOMINFORMIST GROUPS IN YUGOSLAVIA WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO OPERATE WITHOUT THE ACTIVE SUPPORT AND "HOSPITALITY" OF THESE EASTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. THE YUGOSLAV LEADERSHIP, HE SAID, HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND HAD NOTED THE "PRAVDA" COMMENTARY OF NOVEMBER 27 WHICH THE YUGOSLAVS TOOK TO BE A DENUNCIATION BY THE SOVIETS OF THE NEOCOMINFORMIST ACTIVITIES IN YUGOSLAVIA. "NEVERTHELESS," SAID MARGAN, "WE CAN EXPECT CONTINUING EFFORTS AND PROBES BY THESE OUTSIDE FORCES AND GOVERNMENTS THROUGHOUT THE COMING PERIOD, AT LEAST UNTIL SOMETIME AFTER TITO'S DEATH."

4. MARGAN SAID HE WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT ABOUT THE SAME NUMBER OF COMINFORMISTS HAD BEEN DETAINED OR ARRESTED IN MONTENEGRO, IN SERBIA, AND IN CROATIA. HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT THAT FUTURE PRESSURES FROM THIS ELEMENT WOULD BE MOST STRONGLY FELT IN THE EASTERN PART OF YUGOSLAVIA. MARGAN EXPRESSED FEARS THAT EASTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS MIGHT EVEN RESORT TO FORCE IN AN EFFORT TO CHANGE YUGOSLAVIA'S POLITICAL ORIENTATION AND GET IT BACK INTO THE SOVIET BLOC. THE YUGOSLAVS WILL FIGHT, HE SAID, AND THIS CAN MEAN WAR, WITH ITS UNPREDICTABLE HUMAN AND MATERIAL COSTS. MARGAN MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE AUTHORITIES HERE LOOK AT PRESENT UPON THE COMINFORMIST THREAT AS BEING THE MOST SERIOUS ONE.

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5. MARGAN NOTED THAT THE SECURITY PROBLEM IN CROATIA HAS ITS OWN CHARACTER. APART FROM THE COMINFORMISTS, CROATIA IS THE TARGET OF USTASHI SEPARATIST GROUPS WHICH APPARENTLY GET SUPPORT IN WESTERN EUROPE. HE LISTED AUSTRIA, WEST GERMANY, AND FRANCE AMONG THE WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN WHICH THESE GROUPS WERE ABLE TO OPERATE AND RECEIVE TRAINING. HE SAID THAT WHILE YUGOSLAVIA IS OBTAINING INCREASING COOPERATION FROM WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS IN MOVING AGAINST THESE TERRORIST GROUPS, IT NEVERTHE-

LESS SEEMED AS THOUGH THESE GROUPS WERE ALSO GETTING SUPPORT FROM FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES, AMONG OTHER SOURCES.

6. THESE CROATIAN NATIONALIST GROUPS HAVE NO IDEALOGICAL PROGRAM AND SIMPLY HAVE AS THEIR TARGET A SEPARATE CROATIAN STATE AND A FRAGMENTED YUGOSLAVIA. HE CLAIMED THEY INCLUDE CRIMINAL ELEMENTS WHICH PLANNED MURDERS AND BOMB EXPLOSIONS TO TAKE THE LIVES OF INNOCENT VICTIMS.

HE SAID THE SECURITY POLICE HAD SUCCEEDED IN PREVENTING PLANNED BOMB EXPLOSIONS IN DENSELY POPULATED TOURIST CENTERS THIS LAST SUMMER.

7. MARGAN SAID THAT THE CROATIAN AUTHORITIES FEEL THEY HAVE THE SECURITY SITUATION FAIRLY WELL UNDER CONTROL. THE LEADERSHIP HAD CAREFULLY CHOSEN ITS COURSE OF ACTION AGAINST HOSTILE ELEMENTS IN CROATIA. IT WANTED TO AVOID THE MISTAKE OF THE PREVIOUS CROATIAN LEADERSHIP IN THE EARLY 70'S WHICH HAD SOUGHT TO PREACH TO THE REST OF YUGOSLAVIA, AND YET THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP WANTED TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THE REAL SECURITY PROBLEMS FACING CROATIA. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM OF THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS OF CROATIA, THE MEETING OF THE SAWPC, AND OTHER ORGANIZED EFFORTS IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS IN CROATIA WERE DESIGNED TO AIR THE PROBLEM AND TO DEMONSTRATE TO THOSE ABROAD AND INSIDE YUGOSLAVIA THAT THE AUTHORITIES ARE IN CONTROL.

8. MARGAN SAID HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE HIGHER REACHES OF THE CROATIAN GOVERNMENT AND PARTY. HE SAID HE HAD HEARD RUMORS HOWEVER THAT THERE MIGHT BE CHANGES AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL AND IN SERBIA, BUT HE WAS CAREFUL TO SAY THAT THIS WAS JUST A RUMOR HE HAD HEARD.

9. COMMENT: MARGAN'S COMMENTS, GIVEN IN A FRIENDLY AND FORTHCOMING MANNER, WERE PERHAPS MOST NOTABLE FOR THEIR CANDOR IN CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPRESSING CONTINUING CONCERN ABOUT THE COMINFORMIST THREAT SUPPORTED BY THE USSR. (HE NOTED IN THIS REGARD THAT THE COMINFORMIST THREAT HAS TO BE SEEN AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE EXPULSION OF SOME 80,000 PARTY MEMBERS AFTER THE BREAK IN 1948 AND THE IMPRISONMENT OF ABOUT 20,000.) MARGAN ALSO MADE A SOBER ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFORTS FROM THE RIGHT AND LEFT TO SUBVERT YUGOSLAVIA. WHILE CONFIDENT THAT THE YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES WOULD SUCCEED IN RESISTING THESE PRESSURES, HE NEVERTHELESS DID NOT MINIMIZE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE THREAT. END COMMENT. KAISER

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